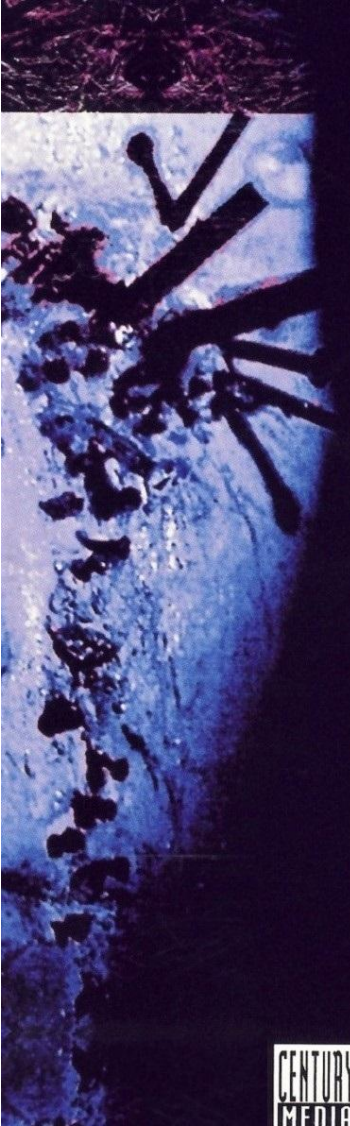

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ARCH ENEMY

My personal feelings for the recording of this album are somewhat mixed.
Mostly because I encountered some problems with my vocal cords after just a few songs.

It made me very frustrated not to be able to deliver to my full capacity in the studio.
The taste of blood was truly overwhelming. I am and have always been my own worst enemy when it comes to self-criticism. Luckily, we recorded two more songs for this album at a later time that turned out just the way "it was meant to be". After all, I love this album!

"Tears Of The Dead" was one of my absolute faves in the live set.
And the brilliant chorus of "Let The Killing Begin" is still haunting me as I find myself humming it every now and then.

Johan Liiva, Helsingborg, Sweden. January 2009

BEAST OF MAN

[music: M. Amott / C. Amott, lyrics: M. Amott]

Beware the beast of man
For he's the devil's pawn
Alone among god's primates
He kills for sport, lust or greed

The sacred scrolls
The truth unfolds ...

Shun him – or become like him
Shun him – the beast of man

Let him not breed in great numbers
For he will make a desert of his home and yours
Shun him – drive him back into his jungle lair
For he is the harbinger of death

"This song was recorded in a later session (again at Studio Fredman) when Daniel Erlandsson has returned to his position behind the drums. Lots of cool riffs and melodies in this one. I was trying to cram in a lot of stuff! Johan was back on top form here, shouting and screaming out a set of lyrics that tell the age old story of how our race is a selfish and self destructive one ..."

STIGMATA

[instrumental]
[music: M. Amott]

"An instrumental guitar orgy! Originally written as the album opener, but it got pushed back the number two spot in the end, as we felt 'Beast Of Man' had turned out so great."

SINISTER MEPHISTO

[music M Amott, lyrics M Amott]

Into the night – the darkest corner of my mind
Sink into my inner self, an erotic fantasy
A spiralling vortex – an instant alter ego fix
Here I am the ruler of all, in this kingdom of sin

(Floating in a dreamlike state
I am the emperor of a paralell universe)

Sinister mephisto – ride the sky
Sinister mephisto – the ultimate high

What I can't have in actuality
I feast upon in my "reality"
An extravaganza of forbidden pleasures
No sexual wish dark enough, to suppress
I am no longer a mortal man

As master of the ceremony – divine perversion
I hereby declare the orgy to begin
Ravage yoru luscious virgin flesh (how I love it)
My cup runneth over – drink my distilled insanity

"Some great riffs and ideas, but the arrangement is maybe a bit thrown together. And an odd set of lyrics penned by yours truly, I have no idea what is going on there! Still, an enjoyable tune!"

DARK OF THE SUN

[music M Amott / C.Amott, lyrics M Amott]

Like insects of the night, we are drawn into the light
Feeding off the starglow energy – controlling our fate

Bloodsucker selling hope to the hopeless
Newborn messiah or the devil incarnate?
Surrounded by a field of lost souls
These feeble minds – so easy to control

Salvation
Damnation
It's all the same to you
But does anyone really know
What the future holds in store

A day will come
When the sun will rise again
Rays of black will shine
And together as one,
We will walk in the dark of the sun

Say a prayer for the unborn child in the womb
The children are the heirs of this dogmatic chaos
Is there a future in this claustrophobic tomb?
We can only rely upon ourselves, to save us

We are the resistance, our last line of defense
Prepared to fight for our promised land
Rebels at heart, they will hunt us to the ends of the earth
The chase is on – forever going on and on

"Lyrically it is yet another post apocalyptic story penned by me. Christopher's guitar solo at 4:57 is phenomenal!"

LET THE KILLING BEGIN

[music M Amott / C Amott, lyrics J Liiva / M Amott]

Anxiety prevails in the end
On deathrow awaiting my fate
Sacrificed upon the altars of justice
Part of the ritual of ultimate fear
Determined men prepare to slay
Executioner's axe draws near
On my way to depart from life
Lost all sense, at the gallows I will die!

Let the killing begin
Let them end your life of sin
Feel the torment within
As the beauty of death sets in

Counting the days, the sleepless nights
Wide awake in a state of lunacy
Voices echo inside my head
Haunting memories, punishing me
Through a tunnel of madness
These endless catacombs
Left to die in a pit of confusion
Swept away by a wave of illusion

"We played this live a lot in 1998-1999, but the song is now retired and currently collecting dust! Yet another outstanding solo by Christopher at 3:21!"

BLACK EARTH

[music M Amott, lyrics J Liiva / M Amott]

Across the lake of fire
Through the deserts of decay
The flames are burning higher
In this land of death you're easy prey

Black Earth
Save – Our – Souls

Looking back in anger
At the twentieth century
Tormented we surrender
In artificial serenity

Twisted, torn and burnt
Violation of the crust
Man got what man deserved
Turned the future into dust

A millenary failure
The dark age has returned
Waiting for a miracle
To save the common herd

"In a century of darkness
The horror spreads within –
As our planet stops to turn
All hope is lost for man"

"Great intro, the voice was computer generated and I love how it sounds. My guitar solo is really strange and quite beautiful. I used the Fernandes sustainer system to get the feedback that I could control."

TEARS OF THE DEAD

[music M Amott, lyrics M Amott]

Hideous crimes, atrocities
The slaughter of millions – beyond belief
Those were dark times, so different from now
The law of evil ruled our fatherland

I was but a pawn in their game
Why should I feel any guilt?
Still when I close, close my eyes
The words unfold, it all comes back

I can't defy it, can't deny it
I know it to be true
In my sleep – they come to haunt me
They know it to be true
Tears of the dead

We are all on the turning wheel of fate
A young man, standing proud in uniform
I never stopped to hesitate
Until it was far to late

My hands are soiled, covered in blood
Stains that never wash away
Their hollow eyes
Confronting me – Judging me

Now an old man, at the end of my days
Contemplating – My life of sin
Living is never simple – the road is hard
I had no say – just a puppet in a sick play

"Lots of mid tempo stuff on this album, this song features riffs that I'd been working on for a while and it finally came together on this record. Some cool drumming from a then very young Peter Wildoer!"

VOX STELLARUM

[instrumental]
[music F Nordström]

"An instrumental piece, written by the producer Fredrik Nordstrom. He played all the keys on this (and the rest of the album). It was nice to record with a real grand piano. I arranged and played all the guitar parts on this one. I love Peter Wildoer's massive toms when he kicks in. It's a power ballad moment!"

BRIDGE OF DESTINY

[music: M. Amott / C.Amott, lyrics: M. Amott]

Standing at the bridge of destiny
So long since I tasted fear
Lurking in the darkest holes
Awaiting my mind's weakest moment
Old words from an old world
Against the laws of nature
They say the truth is overrated
Wall of anger corrupts my thought

Standing at the bridge of destiny
Show me a sign
On the verge of losing my sanity
Free my soul

My inner demons torture me
Flapping their wings in my face
Damn you! You twisted illusion
I am no longer afraid
See through their liquid souls
Evil eyes that will hypnotize
You can no longer hurt me
I am my own worst enemy

Unleash the trapped souls of the dead
Spirits since long forgotten
Guardians fo the lost faith
Destined for glory?
Watch them all turn into sand
And the wind blow them away
Wisdom pours into my soul
endlessly...

"This is another little epic, and a perfect album closer. The song was written by me (music and lyrics) and we later added the brilliant melodic outro section that Christopher brought to the table. Actually, I think the outro is the coolest bit about the song, you might recognize it from our live show. The song also has a middle section with riffs and solos that are fun to play."

HYDRA

[instrumental]
[music: C.Amott / F. Nordström]

"Christopher had the chords and Fredrik Nordström played some spacey keys over them. A little instrumental breather, that originally only appeared on the Japanese release of 'Stigmata'."

DIVA SATANICA

[music: M. Amott / C.Amott, lyrics: M. Amott]

Divine queen of evil
Sowing her seeds of hate
Mistress of pain
Diva satanica – Master of temptation

Medusa... abuser... both beast and beauty
Seducer... she'll use you... bring you to your knees

Blinded by her infinite beauty
you are lured into the temple
The smell of incense burning
this carnal pleasure yearning
Bride of satan

Transgress the rules of this world
Too late you realize
this love is ripping you apart

Medusa... abuser... both beast and beauty
Seducer... she'll use you... as fodder for her dreams

Drinking the blood
Eating the flesh
She's getting high on you
Watching you die gives her a thrill
There is always more blood to spill

"This is one of my top 5 Arch Enemy songs of all time! And to think it originally only appeared on the Japanese release of 'Stigmata' is crazy! This is one of the two songs that we did in later session when Daniel was back on drums (the other song being 'Beast Of Man'). We've played this a lot live with Angela too. It's a ripper!"

DAMNATION'S WAY

[music: J. Liiva / M. Amott, lyrics: J. Liiva / M. Amott]

Set me free, let me out of here
From these chains to which I am bound
Time was always on your side
While my final hours slipped away

Frustration in their minds
The hatred in their eyes
A new breed will now rise
Damnation's way

Losing my grip on reality
Outside this cage I am struck by paranoia
A paradox to all life's mysteries
A never ending trail to follow

I am the sinner upon damnation's way
Always deprived of hope, never to see the break of dawn
My life I lived in the shadow of you
The other side now greets me with open arms

STIGMATA
Produced by Fredrik Nordström
Co-produced by Michael Amott for Savage Messiah Music
Engineered by Fredrik Nordström
Recorded and mixed at Studio Fredman, October 1997
"Beast Of Man" and "Diva Satanica" recorded January 1998 at Studio Fredman
Mastered at The Mastering Room by Göran Finnberg

LIVE TRACKS
Produced by Fredrik Nordström and Michael Amott
Mixed by Fredrik Nordström
Recorded live in Tokyo, Japan – October / November 1999
Live engineer and recording – Steve Gurney
Mixed at Studio Fredman, Gothenburg, Sweden, February 2000
Mastered at The Mastering Room by Göran Finnberg

All selections arranged by Michael Amott, Christopher Amott and Peter Wildoer
except "Hydra" (C. Amott, F. Nordström) and "Vox Stellarum" (F Nordström, M. Amott)
All keyboards and grand piano played by Fredrik Nordström
Original artwork and design by Segerfalk X
Masques designed and photographed by Segerfalk X and Kristian Gunnemo
Band photography by Carl Ljundberg
Additional cover artwork by Kris Verwimp
Remastered by Ulf Horbelt at DMS Mastering, Marl, Germany
Additional layouts by Media Logistics GmbH – www.medialogistics.com
Product coordination by Philipp Schulte
Track-by-track comments by Michael Amott
Drums on track 1, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16 by Daniel Erlandsson

The "Stigmata" line-up:
Johan Liiva – vocals
Martin Bengtsson – bass
Peter Wildoer – drums
Michael Amott – lead & rhythm guitars
Christopher Amott – lead & rhythm guitars